

Facebook new frontier in parent-teen relationship



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NEW YORK (Reuters Life!) – Roughly two thirds of American teenagers are comfortable enough with their parents to have them as Facebook friends, according to a new study.

But 16 percent of students said befriending their parents was a precondition for joining the social networking site and 38 percent said they simply ignored friend requests from their father or mother.

"Facebook ... continues to be the new frontier in the ever evolving relationship between parent and child," said Kristen Campbell, of Kaplan Test Prep, which questioned 2,313 students, aged about 16 to 18, about social networking trends.

The study showed that 65 percent of teens "are not hiding and that is positive," said Campbell, an executive director at the company that develops college prep programs.

For many young Americans Facebook offers an opportunity to remain independent from their parents, according to Campbell.

"Even though parents are very involved and very active, Facebook allows young people to exert their independence," she explained. "They want part of their lives to be private."

In some instances, parents and their children decide to mutually keep their Facebook lives separate. Even though many teens ignore friend requests from their parents, 82 percent of teens report that their parents are either "very involved" or "somewhat involved" in their academic lives.

Campbell described Facebook as a natural step in being connected for a generation that has grown up with the Internet.

"This is a generation that's communicating electronically and now the lines of communication are open in new ways."

(Reporting by Bernd Debusmann Jr., editing by Patricia Reaney)